



CZECH - GERMAN CONNECTIONS

Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences
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OPINIONS OF THE ELITES IN CZECH - SAXON AREAS ABOUT CROSS - BORDER COOPERATION

*Consequences of the Czech Republic Joining the European Union
in the Environment of Czech-Saxon Border Areas*

In the following survey we bring essential data from the partial depth probe of current opinions and attitudes of some of numerous elites from the borderland between the CR and the FRG, which are concerned with the possibility of cooperation along the border of these two countries. The probe is part of the three year research project called "The Civic Dimension of Czech-German Relations in the Phase of Accession of the CR to the European Union with an Emphasis on the Border Areas" in the framework of the Programme of Support for Targeted Research and Development of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (IBS7028301). The probe was carried out in June 2004.

This research contributes to the recording and evaluating of the perception of Germany in the opinions and attitudes of the Czech borderland inhabitants in the period of the Czech Republic joining the European Union. It was directed at local elites - i.e. citizens who have more than an average chance of influencing public opinions, the local economy, the development of municipalities, etc., since they have key positions in the political sphere of influence (mayors and other representatives), at the economic (entrepreneurs, managers), or civic and cultural structure (representatives of public bodies, doctors/ physicians, headmasters, etc.).

The addressed group of respondents was selected on the basis of two points of view: their position in the social structure of the local community and the scope and content of their good cross-border experience and contacts. For that reason we did not investigate only their positions in the political, economic and intellectual sphere of municipal life and (the) life of the region, but also the intensity and character of their cross-border contacts.

Reference to Some Possibilities for Cross-Border Cooperation

- Every fourth respondent enjoys permanent cross-border activities or long-term contacts; with the most frequent activities being those of a private and civic character (shopping, trips, cooperation with civic organizations);
- 29 % of the respondents have no activities or contacts, 44 % of contacts are characterised as occasional;
- Only 16 % of the respondents - members of Czech local elites - designated their German as good or fluent; one half of respondents do not speak German at all;
- Knowledge of German is not associated with cross-border activities and any cooperation between mayors and other representatives of municipalities - we have not found any statistically significant aberrations;
- However, the most frequent bearers/carriers of

institutionalised cross-border activities are political and intellectual elites;

- The dominating opinion is that the impact of the Germans in the cross-border areas is predominantly useful;
- A well-observed trend from the last couple of years is the influence of German fellow-citizens in Czech cross-border municipalities;
- 39 out of 68 municipalities are said to have partnership contracts signed with municipalities in the Federal Republic of Germany;
- Municipalities have been developing this cooperation for approximately 10 years; most often it is developed in the area of sports activities and it also covers cultural and social events;
- The awareness of this kind of cooperation (or partnership) with German municipalities among respondents is quite high;
- Where this cooperation exists, it is, according to members of the local elites, predominantly good;
- In all spheres mutual cooperation is appraised much better by election supporters of the political left wing.

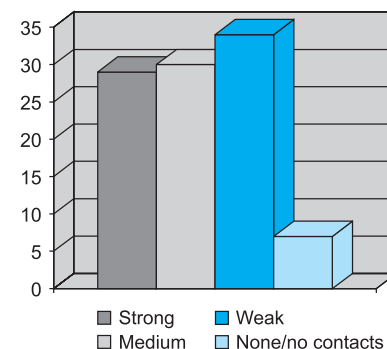
Regarding the Evaluation of German Influence in Czech Border Areas

- 70 % of members of local elites assesses contemporary relations between the Czech Republic and Germany as positive;
- There is a relative majority of positive assessments in the group of respondents older than 45 years in the Czech municipalities which maintain partner relationships with German towns and villages, mainly among members of the local communities' political segments and the respondents educated at the university;
- The assessment of selected institutions' impact on cross-border relations is influenced by their awareness of the activities carried out by institutions; the lowest familiarity being discovered with the activity of the Coordination Council of the Czech-German Discussion Forum. Most frequently the respondents enunciated their attitudes to the Nisa Euroregion.
- Nearly all institutions having impacts on Czech-German relations are assessed positively;
- It is predominantly the political segment asserting power that has a tendency to positively assess the institutional impact on Czech-German relations;
- Approximately three quarters of all respondents are interested in problems of the so called "Sudeten Germans" and their activities in the Czech Republic;
- However, the local elites do not often consider the impact of the "Sudeten Factor" to be important for the overall total state of Czech-German relations. Only 53% of people consider this fac-

MAIN TOPICS INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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- **Comparison of Stability and Mobility of the CR Inhabitants and Those Living in the ELBE/LABE Euroregion**
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- **Standard Rubric - Literature Referring to the Main Theme, A Small Encyclopaedia of Terms, Institutions of Czech-German Cooperation**

Figure 1. The intensity of cross-border activities and contacts of Czech local elites developed together with their partners on the German (Saxon) side of the border (data in %)



Source: Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, The 2004 Research of Elites in Cross-Border Areas of the Czech Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany

Note: The data include both the respondents' professional and private activities

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- tor as very important or rather important;
- From the proposals for a possible solution of the "Sudeten Issue", the following three dominate: Declaration is the basic document for the solution of the whole problem; it will be sufficient to apologise; it will be necessary to cooperate with Sudeten German organizations;
 - According to the majority of local elites everyday relations and common contacts between people on both sides of the cross-border area are good or very good;
 - The opening of the frontier would be, according to three quarters of respondents, a positive reality.
 - 80 % of participants of local elites consider the Czech Republic joining the European Union to be a very good or a fairly good thing;
 - According to the majority of respondents, the Czech Republic will get financial support for its economic development from the EU funds and new markets for sales of home products by entering the EU. At the same time the overall majority of respondents (90 %) expect that by entering the EU we can expect a rise in the cost of living;
 - In comparison with general public attitudes the Czech - German Border Area local elites seem

- to be more optimistic in questions of financial assistance from the EU funding, the growth of the standard of living and the possibilities of reducing the unemployment rate;
- The EU membership will remove, according to the majority of the local elites, the disadvantage associated with the peripheral location of cross-border territories. It will also help with the development of municipalities located in the cross-border territory and improvement of relations between inhabitants of both countries;
 - As a whole, it is possible to claim that positive assessment and optimism prevail in the answers of local elites to selected questions concerning the CR joining the European Union and its consequences for further development of cross-border areas.

To Questions Concerning the Effectiveness of Autonomy and Seat of Stability of the Local Elites

- Local elites do not support any change in the position of Euroregion and their efforts to get more autonomy;
- It is necessary that countryside services, coun-

selling and information centres should be established;

- The inclination of local elites to "localism" has been analysed, i.e. emphasis on solving problems by local elites;
- Strongest support is given to the requirement that the local boards of representatives should be given the opportunity to pay more attention to the living conditions of their inhabitants;
- Nearly one half of all respondents - members of local elites - has been living in the border territory since their birth and nearly one third moved to this area before 1989;
- 96 % of respondents feel "at home" in the place where they are now living and feel that "they belong to this place";
- 74 % do not think of moving away from the border territory and roughly one quarter admits that one day they may leave the place;
- The most frequent "stabilisation factors" for the life of local elites in the border areas are: their families, the family background, good living conditions, the environment and finally the possibility of finding a good and interesting job.

Václav Houžvička

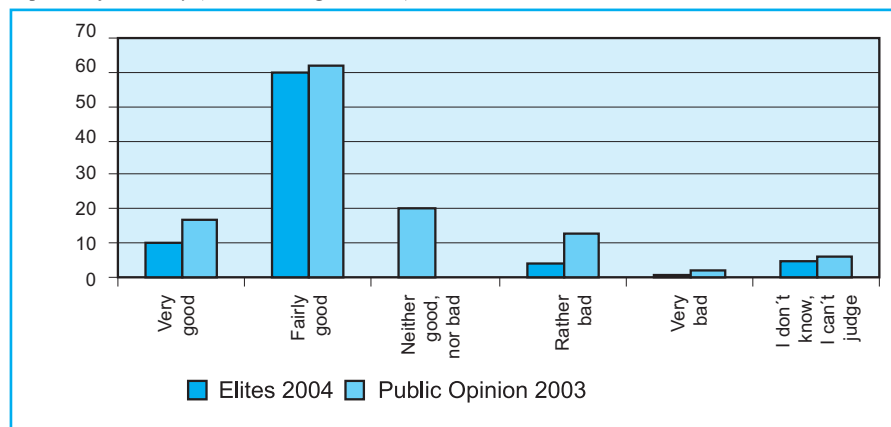
LOCAL ELITES DISCUSSING PROBLEMS OF THE SAXON CROSS-BORDER AREA

Further comments on the research project, the Tima Agency in cooperation with the department of Czech-Border Regions Department of Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, has conducted research dealing with in current opinions concerning the cross-border cooperation between the Czech Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany. The content of the research was directed to the local elites participants' opinions in the area of the wider cross-border area with the Free Federal State of Saxony (roughly in the zone of the territory between the villages of Jirkov and Vysoké nad Jizerou).

The questionnaire investigation distinguished between members of the political and administrative elite (the mayor's position, that of the mayor's deputy and members of the board of representatives), the economic elite (i.e. head positions in a local company, company ownership, etc.) and the cultural and ideological elite (in general all respectable positions of an authoritative character, such as for instance a doctor or a university lecturer).¹ The main criterion for the selection of respondents has not thus been the representative nature of samples, on the contrary it was their affiliation to a specific group, which is considerably non-homogenous but still influences, in a substantial manner, the situation and the development of life in the local community. The research focused on those municipalities engaged in cross-border cooperation: i.e. the municipalities which have a partner on the other side of the frontier or which have been included in the Phare CBC programme, or are located in close proximity to the frontier. Included have been areas of Šluknovsko, Českolipsko, Frýdlantsko, Liberecko and Jablonecko. The research task was to map the participation of the local elites in creating the cross-border cooperation network (cross-border communities). The object of the interest was the attitudes of the leaders or the elites' own active contribution to the process influencing the municipality or the town and the attitudes of leaders (opinion leaders), who, to a certain extent, form or participate in forming public opinions of the community.

The characteristics of individual members of the border community elites proved to be an interesting moment. In compliance with our expectations, men together with middle aged people (ratio 6:4) prevailed in them, i.e. people between the thirtieth and the fifty-ninth year of life formed the

Figure 2. Comparison of the assessment of the relations between the Czech Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany (the data are given in %)



Source: Institute of Sociology Academy of Sciences of the CR, Research in Elites in the Border Area between the Czech Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany, 2004

overwhelming majority. The other fact, which deserved more attention, was associated with the younger age categories in which the proportion of women has increased. In groups of women between the ages of 18 and 29 and 30 and 44 have even exceeded the number of men. The smaller participation of women in public life and their lower representation in the local elites thus appears to be a generation of problem. The trend in contemporary society is aimed in a different direction (in compliance with the trends in the whole society, e.g. in the communal policy). According to our expectations, formal education proved to be one of the components granting legitimacy to the local opinion leaders. In the majority of cases, they achieved either a high school or a university diploma. Thus they are, on the average, more educated than the rest of the population. Nearly one half of the respondents was born in the borderland, one third moved to that area before 1989, but nearly one fifth of the elites' members, who have been living here for a period shorter than 15 years (they came here after 1989), exhibit an enormous social openness towards the existing borderland communities.²

A quite high degree of engagement among newcomers in public life has also been shown by representative research, carried out in 1996. In this

research the people who moved to the borderland form 40% of respondents and they participate in the life of the borderland elites with 49%. It is obvious that members of the borderland elites are politically oriented to the right and the preferred political party is the ODS (The Civic Democratic Party). The legitimacy of our incorporating these citizens in the sample has been tested indirectly by the following question: How many people can the respondent influence in their opinion concerning problems of the borderland impact on the environment? Nearly one half of the respondents mentioned 1 to 10 persons. However, 16% admitted that they could influence opinions of 21 and more people. Thus they reflected the role of opinion leaders attributed to them inside the community, which can be now magnified to a great extent by mass media, namely those having local competence. The most general question the respondents were answering in this research was concerned with the assessment of current relations between the Czech Republic and Germany.

The overall majority (70 %) of the respondents agreed with the conclusion that the relations between both the countries are good, although one tenth of them tended towards the extreme variant (very good). One fifth can see current relations as

neutral, only a negligible number of members of the elites have answered the question in a negative way.

The refore, the issue of our relations with Germany does not prove to be a controversial theme dividing the borderland population. From a very low number of the "I do not know" answers it is, in addition to that, obvious that the question is relevant or important; that it is still a subject under their consideration and that they have a clear-cut opinion about these problems. Under these circumstances, it is possible to assess as the most important the finding that hardly any of the addressed respondents can see the mutual relations between the Czech Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany as critical or bad. From this point of view no one perceives Germany as an immediate or open threat to Czech Republic state interests.

In comparison with the research of 2003, which representatively covered the whole population (though in a wider range of the whole border between the Czech Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany), it seems that the elites' members evaluate our relations with Germany in a more moderate way than the rest of the population, i.e. they have selected the answer "very good" and "rather bad" less frequently, as the graph shows.

To a certain extent, the differences can be explained by showing that in 2003 the respondents were not offered the neutral answer "neither good, nor bad" and they were forced to rove towards one

of the two poles. These hesitating respondents would not probably select the ultimate positive variant. Namely the results in the positive pole of responses can be considered to be diverse in terms of opinions.

In spite of a high degree of consent various categories of respondents differed in their answers. It was shown that the respondents from those villages, which maintain partner relationships with German municipalities, evaluate mutual relations much better: experience in relations at the communal level is significantly reflected in their evaluation of interstate relations in the municipalities with a partner on the other side of the frontier. In some respect it is surprising that the respondents, more than 45 years old, are more optimistic in their assessment of mutual relations. The relation between age and the opinion can be explained most probably by that fact that each assessment is, in principle, a relative matter and that the older generation has had a chance of comparing current relations with Germany with those of former times. The positive assessment can mean, "it is better than before", or "it (the relations) could be worse".

The trend to assess Czech-German relations in a positive way rises positively with the increasing level of education (which is a long-term trend), although, it reflects, in fact, only a comparison between secondary school-educated and university-educated respondents. There was only a minimum number of persons with lower than secondary edu-

cation in the sample. In spite of that it is impossible to say that lower education would mean a withdrawal from a barrier in the assessment of our relationship to Germany, since there was only a very limited number of negative answers in the sample.

As expected, our relations with Germany were much more positively evaluated by those respondents who also stated more intensive and personal cross-border contacts (and therefore also a certain extent of personal experience) of whatever character (in the area of work, hobbies and interests, friends, tourism and shopping). However, in this case it is difficult to determine the cause and the consequence, or whether any negative assessment of mutual relations may lead to the avoidance of contacts with Germans, or whether a more intensive contact causes a more positive view of interstate relations. All the same, it confirms the fact that better knowledge and a bigger amount of information means a better evaluation (which subsequently further strengthens the desire to acquire information and knowledge).

1. Individual segments have often been accumulated, namely in small villages- e.g. the Mayor's deputy was the local school headmaster or the local enterprise owner.
2. The historical connection associated with the borderland settlement can explain the situation; to a certain extent all inhabitants are "new" here.

Jitka Laštovková

STABILITY AND MOBILITY OF INHABITANTS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND IN THE EUROREGION LABE/ELBE

Comparison of the data collected at the national and regional levels

Under the circumstances of the Czech Republic in general and in Northern Bohemia (in our case represented by the Elbe/Labe Euroregion) in particular, a question arises or rather arose as to the stability of the population and it has become a frequently discussed theme both among specialists and the general public. On the other hand, one can reach for the reasons either in the post-war population and settlement development, or in the traditionally oriented economy of this area. Migration (or mobility) on the other hand plays a significant role as an indicator, or a mediator or co-creator of the positive development in the field of the social and economic development.

Affiliation to a certain territory, or its intensity, influences, the viability of possibilities in this or that region to a certain extent. At the same time we can look at this topic from various aspects: either from the social, as a sign of an advanced society, or spatial, as an attribute of stable settlement, or the economic aspect, as one of the prerequisites of regional development. The more the population feels connected with its territory, the more likely these people are willing to "offer their utmost".

The Czech population can be characterised - in comparison with other states (regions) - by less mobility, usually realized within shorter distances. In recent years also its intensity has been decreasing and its forms have been changing, perhaps surprisingly, from permanent migration to commuting to work, to school and to access services, etc.

Methodology of the Research

Within the three-year research project the team focused, in 2003, on the performance of its own empirical investigation, at both the national level (in cooperation with the Centre for investigating opinions /CVVM/ of Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech

Republic) and the model areas (with the exception of the Labe/Elbe Euroregion territory it was the Prague agglomeration, Western Bohemia with the town of Plzeň, Southern Moravia with the town of Brno and the Moravian and Silesian Region with Ostrava).

The questionnaire of the field research was structured into four parts investigating the following phenomena: bonding with the place of residence, working conditions, working abroad (as well as foreign employees in the Czech Republic), the borderland, cross-border contacts and the theme of European integration. More than 15-year old inhabitants were selected as the target group and the method of the quota sampling (according to the respondents' sex, age, education and their place of residence) were given preference with the aim of reflecting a broad representation during the research. Purely for the purposes of this paper we have selected only examples from the introductory block of questions.

The acquired data enable us to compare the national population (1048 respondents) with Czech part of the Labe/Elbe Euroregion (523 respondents). With regards to the thematic orientation of the research, the representation of respondents living in the borderland territory has been increased (municipalities located in the vicinity of the frontier). Thanks to our cooperation with the Technische Universität Dresden also similar data representing the situation in the German part of the Euroregion (804 respondents) are available.

Stability - Living Conditions- Population Migration

Nearly 40 % of the Czech population older than 15 (and nearly one half of the Labe/Elbe Euroregion inhabitants) has never changed their place of residence, i.e. has never changed the municipality of their permanent address. In the

case where it has happened, it occupied happened only once (roughly 1/4 of respondents from the assessed file) and in case of monitoring multiple migrations we can speak about a "negative correlation" in the representative sample.

The intensity of frequency of the respondents moving from one place to another is naturally influenced by their age; it increases with progressing age (in the group of 20 to 29 years old 48% of them have never experienced any change of residence while for respondents 45 years old and older a similar assessment reaches only 28%). The second factor that differentiates the Czech population is the category of the size of the place of residence. In compliance with our expectations it can be observed that the stability of inhabitants is considerably reduced with dependence on the growth of residential areas. In the smallest places (municipalities of up to 800 inhabitants) the participation of fellow citizens (born in this municipality) exceeds one half of the population older than 19 years; in cities it ranges between one third and one quarter; in Prague it does not reach one fifth of all inhabitants. If we replace the model Euroregion by a different unit - NUTS II Northwest (i.e. the Karlovy Vary Region and the Ústí Region), the non-presence of moving from one place to another is proclaimed by 20% of respondents. A certain role is undoubtedly played by the structure and the size of individual administrative units.

The occurrence and frequency of moving is, among other things, influenced by the level of the achieved education and the industrial structure of the economically active persons. Higher ranked professional employees, managers together with intermediate specialists and entrepreneurs, employees in the sphere of transport and communications or those in the financial sphere and public services focused on companies or plants, are also marked by higher mobi-

lity. Further, we were trying to investigate what led the respondents of the "reduced file" to move to the place of their current residence. This private question specified 9 possibilities and enabled the respondent to select between two options (see Table 1).

These seem to be - at both the levels - an unequivocal dominance of family reasons. This is also supported by hard facts whenever the classification accepted by us includes also the aggregate of possibilities used by the Czech Statistical Authority (marriage, divorce, following a family member to another place). At the national level also housing conditions significantly dominate in the research, while at the regional level the representation of the reasons associated with respondents moving to different places of residence is more level-headed. In the investigation carried out by the CVVM, the respondents have given more reasons than in those carried out by means of the UJEP students.

A strong link to the place of residence can be expressed by the following propositions:

- The respondent has his family background, friends and acquaintances here;
- He owns a house, a flat, a garden or some other property;
- He is at home here and knows the place very well;
- There is a good environment here;
- He has a good job here.

The propositions are arranged in their order of importance, which is in fact identical for both monitored levels, including the achieved proportion in the applied four-degree rating scale national level expressed satisfaction with their lives in their place of residence, while in the Labe/Elbe Euroregion it was only a little bit more than one half of all respondents (69 vs. 52 %). At both levels we came across a considerable proportion of undecided respondents (one quarter or more than one third of all respondents).

From the joint investigation carried out in the Czech-Saxon Borderland we wish to present here - as an extension of the previous question - only a comparison of the living conditions in the place of permanent residence, this time with the cross-border dimension. All respondents always assessed only "their" part of the Euroregion, i.e. the German and the Czech part respectively.

In my opinion it is indicative in this matter

Table 1. Satisfaction of Inhabitants with Living Conditions in the Labe/Elbe Euroregion

Specification of the rate of the answer variant representation (in %)	Quite to Reasonably satisfied		Partly		Rather to strongly unsatisfied		It does not concern me	
	G/S	CZ	G/S	CZ	G/S	CZ	G/S	CZ
Working Opportunities	17,5	20,6	20,5	27,8	47,2	38,3	14,8	13,3
Public Transport Accessibility	37,3	53,3	30,0	24,7	22,4	17,0	10,3	5,0
An Offer for Children's leisure time	19,5	25,6	29,4	32,9	29,3	27,5	21,8	14,0
An Offer for of the Youth's leisure time	5,9	19,9	20,0	33,1	55,7	33,8	18,5	13,3
Possibilities for Adults' leisure time	18,6	25,4	34,7	37,1	41,1	29,7	5,7	7,8
Possibilities of Sports Activities	38,8	37,7	32,8	30,3	19,5	22,7	8,9	9,4
Possibilities of Cultural Activities	19,1	25,1	28,8	30,9	47,9	38,2	4,3	5,8
Conditions in Restaurants	58,3	40,8	24,2	31,1	14,8	15,6	2,6	12,5
Health Service and Social Care	58,1	32,5	27,6	36,0	12,9	27,0	1,4	4,4

Source: Research in Cross-Borderland + TU Dresden, 2003

Note: The abbreviation G/S designates the Saxon part of the Euroregion territory, while CZ designates the Czech part

that the perception of different areas shows a striking similarity whenever the sections assessed in the best way and those assessed as worst are identical: in the positive sense of the word it is public transport: restaurants with shopping and the possibility to find a job have been assessed as positive, negatively assessed were working and cultural opportunities and the road network.

Less than one tenth of respondents are thinking about leaving their place of residence and moving out of it. The stated reasons this time indicate different proportions: while a relatively balanced representation can be found at the national level (e.g. family reasons in the fourth position with 24 %), in the model region the proportion of most significantly represented job/study reasons corresponds with the aggregate of family and housing reasons (39 %).

In the selection of the potential place of residence (considering there are no limitations) the respondents representing the Czech population slightly prefer a municipality located near a medium-sized or smaller town (approximately one fifth of respondents); further possibilities - rather those of an urban character - are represented more or less equally. An open question has also been included in the model region

questionnaire, which enabled us to subsequently determine the "desired" area or locality. If we wish to reveal this locality (with regards to less frequent answers) then, for inhabitants of the Labe Euroregion, the unanimously attractive seems to be the Capital Prague (40% of all possible migrants head for this town) and Prague is followed by the following districts (in the order of the respondents' interest): Litoměřice, Liberec and Tachov.

Final Remarks

The main aim of this contribution is to show the possibilities of the amplification and broadening of objective assessment of the current social and economic processes making use of a subjective view (also based on responses of the representatives at the national and regional level). The research team was working with a sufficient scope of all the files of the so called "soft data" and this will enable the assertion to be pronounced concerning the strong similarity in the behaviour, opinions and attitudes of the Czech Republic population, with the situation in both German and Czech parts of the model Labe /Elbe Euroregion.

Milan Jeřábek

INSTITUTIONS OF CZECH - GERMAN COOPERATION

- With the East European countries entering the EU, the process of the gradual overcoming of the long-term division of the continent and the focusing on higher forms of European cooperation has been ushered in. In connection with this process the borderland between the CR and the FRG will play an invaluable role in the "contact territory".
- IDOR is the Czech acronym for the Czech-German Information and Documentation Centre for Supporting the Regional Cross-Border Cooperation. It is a project supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the CR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany. IDOR is conceived as a multiplication of cross-border cooperation serving to interconnect the existing cooperation structures between people and institutions along the Czech-German border.
- IDOR offers disadvantaged regions, located far from its centre, the use of financial means from EU funds, the withdrawal of which is based on the condition of bilateral co-operation. The consistently prepared Internet portal in two languages

provides online information about projects, seminars, state discussions, expert activities, contact markets and study trips for young people abroad, etc. It also acts as a manager of some of the cross-border projects (pilot initiative of the Czech-German Football School, etc.).

- All Internet portals and the central database of Czech-German Projects in borderland areas (with registered office in Marktredwitz and Železná Ruda) have been established as a concrete reaction to the results of the 2001 opinion survey carried out in 150 cross-border areas. The survey required more information about partners on the other side of the border, more transparency and mutual exchange of experience in the area of cross-border cooperation among the EU member states.
- In 2003, IDOR advertised, in cooperation with the Coordination Council of the Czech-German Discussion Forum, a competition for the best partnership among the towns that, besides being evaluated as best cooperating twins of Czech and German towns and villages, also represented basic research in the given theme. The

total number of thirteen partnerships with excellent and intensive cooperation were selected on the basis of a comprehensive evaluation and on 7th September 2003 they were handed a reward in the town of Plauen on the occasion of the music festival "In the Central Europe, which was taking place there. Among the rewarded towns were for instance Karlovy Vary-Baden-Baden, Domažlice-Furth im Wald, Děčín-Pirna, Stříbro-Vohenstrauß and other.

Václav Houžvička

Further information
are available
at the website:

www.idor.org

www.idor.cz

THE REFLECTION OF THE RELATIONS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC TO SURROUNDING COUNTRIES

Relations with surrounding countries are, undoubtedly, a significant determinant and at the same time a key indicator of the stability of the international and political anchorage of each state. Regional forms of cooperation with geographically, culturally and historically related states, with which we are often linked by natural and very close economic ties, is therefore an Alpha and Omega of the Czech Republic foreign policy. The political representation has set the goal of intensifying Central European cooperation as one of its foreign policy priorities - though today, in a qualitatively different context of the commonly shared destiny in the unified Europe - with both "old" neighbouring member states of the European Union, i.e. with Germany and Austria, and the countries of the so called "Visegrad Four" (Slovak Republic, Hungary and Poland), which, like the Czech Republic, only recently have obtained the first hand experience of the institutional connections to European integration structures.

Although a number of unsettled historical disputes still exist between the Czech Republic and other countries of the Central European territory, which, at certain moments, snowballs into actual political disputes and become a burden for mutual relations not only at the state and official levels, but also at the "civic" level. There is no doubt however about mutual relations between the CR and other countries being avoid of any serious conflicts, at least in its basic and officially declared intentions.

Nevertheless, the main aim of this article is to show the above-mentioned community dimension, i.e. the existing attitudes of the Czech public to the CR relations with surrounding countries. The awareness of one's neighbourhood - namely its quality and intensity - creates basic coordinates of space-time "mental maps" of the Czech Republic inhabitants.

Assessment of Our Relations with Surrounding Countries

The fact that respondents perceive the Czech Republic relations with Poland (94 %) and Slovakia (92 %) - now with an extraordinary level of consensus - traditionally as best of all. More than 90% of respondents consider these relations to be very good or fairly good.¹ There is a very high ratio of positive opinions (86 %) as far as the relations with Hungary are concerned. The ratio/proportion of the negative assessment of Czech - Hungarian relations is,

however, at approximately the same level as in the case of Slovakia and Poland, which indicates a relatively large group of respondents who were not able to classify the relations with Hungary (10 %).² The relations with Germany and Austria are assessed as positive by a smaller number of respondents. In the case of Germany, 73% of respondents assessed our mutual relations as good and 23% of the addressed persons indicated them as bad. Our relations with Austria are perceived as the worst of all, 69% of the research participants supposed that these relations were good and 26 % of respondents thought that the relations were bad. In both the above-mentioned cases (i.e. in the case of Germany and Austria) the overall majority of respondents were able to express their opinions concerning the quality of these relations with the Czech Republic. Only 4% or 5% of all respondents remained either undecided or used the answer "I do not know".

From the point of view of basic sociodemographic characteristics it is possible to maintain, with a certain degree of generalisation, that the ratio of those respondents who consider the relations with all surrounding countries as good increases along with the achieved level of education (it is clear that these relations are most positively assessed in the group of university educated people). Also, a higher ratio of positive responses is perceived among inhabitants of Prague, entrepreneurs and supporters of the ODS. By contrast, it is quite interesting to show that the relations with Germany and Austria are assessed as much worse by the KSCM supporters. In all probability this fact is the result of Czech relations to both these countries being burdened by the Sudeten German issue, which is the theme to which the electorate of the KSCM members traditionally held a clear-cut position.

A slightly different visual angle of the given issue can be offered by another investigation, the aim of which was to discover the respondent's trust towards the citizens who live in the individual countries (see Table 2).³

From the results in Table 2 it is clear that this type of investigation has brought a slightly different type of response; i.e. different from the answers which appeared in the general evaluation of formal relations at the interstate level. The greatest sympathy of the Czech population is on the side of Slovak and Polish inhabitants. An interesting finding appears in the case of

Table 2. Trust of Czech citizens toward surrounding states (in %)

%	Fairly trust	Fairly mistrust	don't know
Slovakia	82	14	4
Poland	71	2	9
Hungary	58	25	17
Austria	56	35	9
Germany	38	55	7

Source: CVVM: the research "Our society in 2004", 18th-28th June

Hungary, where nearly one fifth of respondents were not able to express their points of view. In the case of German inhabitants mistrust or non-confidence (55 %) preponderates over trust (38 %). The above-mentioned investigation also reveals a paradox: at the "civic" level certain mistrust dominates, probably nourished by various historical and perceived stereotypes, while at variance with it the assessment of the relations between states (see above) is relatively good (and allow us to add: it is rational and corresponding with reality).

Assessment of Our Relations with Neighbouring Countries - Chronological Comparison

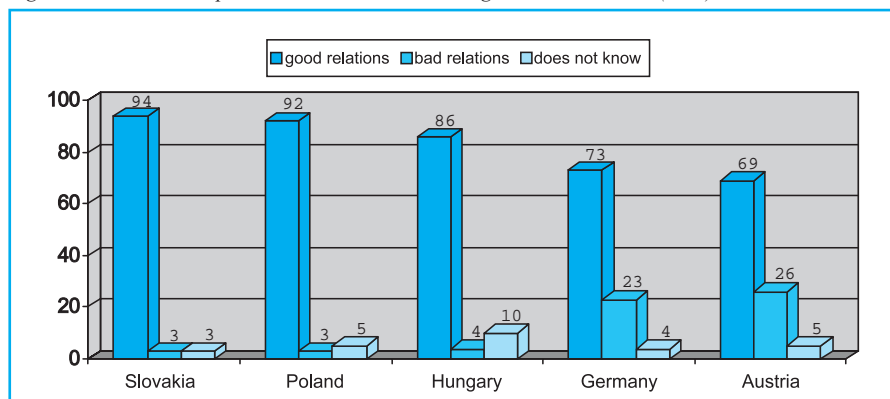
In the case of Hungary, Poland and Austria we have the possibility of comparing the current results with those acquired in March 2000 and January 2003 (see Table 3 and Figure 5). In the case of Czech-German and Czech-Slovak relations the data (data from 1995 or 1996) are available for long-term comparative research (See Figures 4 and 5).

From the acquired results it can be inferred that as a whole these types of research sensitively reflect the current state of interstate relations at the "high" political level. While the relations of the Czech Republic with Slovakia and Poland are assessed, on a long-term basis, as quite positive, in the relations to the other monitored countries the investigators registered a sharp decline in positive assessment during the last five years.

The relations with Poland and Slovakia are - at least in the perspective of a few recent years - stable and without problems, they can even be described as relations based on close cooperation, which is reflected in the respondents' attitudes. At present the Czech Republic relations with Hungary are now highly valued - they are assessed as good by more than four fifths of respondents. The temporal decline of positive assessment of the Czech-Hungarian relations which was observed in spring 2002, was in all probability associated with the pointed discussions of that time, focused on the so called Beneš' Decrees. In connection with that event, we wish to remind the readers of that fact that not only the official authorities of Germany and Austria, but also leading representatives of the Hungarian government with the Prime Minister Orbán leading the charge entered the hot discussion revolving around the Beneš' decrees.

Significantly different was the development of evaluation of the relations between the Czech Republic and Austria, which have always been assessed as the worst of all in the context of the Central European region. Their perception is still quite ambivalent, contrary to a significant improvement of relations, as compared (namely) with the investigation of 2002. At the beginning of 2002 Czech-Austrian relations were (in addition to that, they were assessed in the turmoil of pre-election campaign) unfortunately saturated by polemics surrounding Beneš' decrees. In the period of certain political tension between Prague and Vienna (in March 2002) mutual relations were assessed as extraordinarily unfavourable (only one quar-

Figure 3. The Czech Republic Relations to Surrounding Countries in 2004 (in %)



Source: CVVM; The research called "Our Society in 2004", 18th - 28th June, N = 1040

Note: good relations = the aggregate of the following answers: "very good" and "fairly good", bad relations = the aggregate of the following answers: "very bad" and "rather bad"

ter of respondents considered them good). However, let us mention that in the past they were repeatedly and also with a different degree of intensity disturbed by the following media-driven political evergreens: apart from the Sudeten German issue, there were tedious disputes concerning the completion of the Temelin nuclear power station construction. In the latest research Czech -Austrian relations were assessed the most favourable in the last four-year period. In comparison with the last investigation (January 2003) the proportion of positive statements has increased by nearly 20 % of points and thus approached the opinions concerning our relations with Germany.

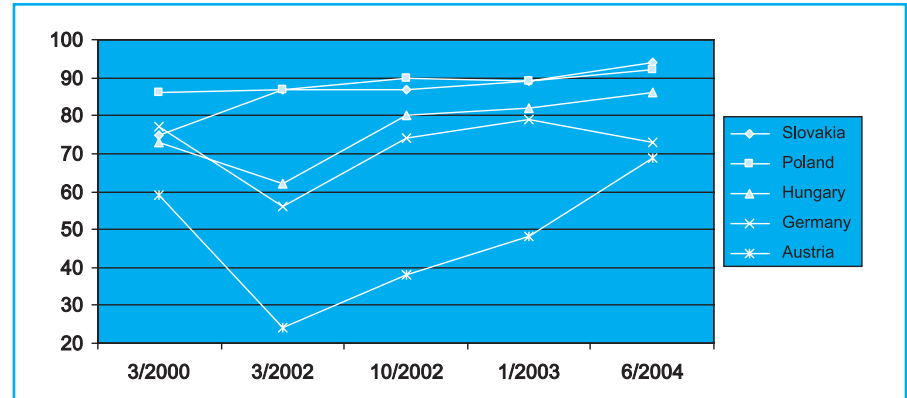
Also the perception of Czech -German relations is undoubtedly influenced by a certain historically determined burden. There is a more significant (and therefore reflected) friction surface in the relations between the Czech Republic and Germany. Then there evidently seems to be a slightly different legal and political interpretation of the course and the results of the Second World War, including the subsequent eviction/transfer. The evaluation of our bilateral relations since 1995 seems to be quite dependent on the current state of the dialogue about the open questions relating to the past (positive - minimum 45%, maximum 79%). No wonder that, within the given context, at the beginning of 1996, i.e. in the unsettled atmosphere of the preparation of the Czech-German Declaration, there was a sharp decline in the favourable evaluation of mutual relations. In 1999, however, the ratio of positive votes got to the level of the first finding and in 2000 the view was even more favourable. In spring 2002, there was again a significant decline in the positive assessment, although the values recorded in the last investigations returned again to the relatively high level of the year 2000. Undoubtedly, at that time it was connected with the reaction of the general public to the turbulences in Czech-German relations of that time, and here is an analogy with Austria. Let's remind you that only with the relations to Germany were these results compared with the last research (January 2003). In comparison with other monitored countries, there was a decline (by 6% of points) in the proportion of the positive statements (See Figure 5).

The above mentioned facts show that those aforementioned historical resentiments, repeatedly re-opening old wounds and irritating also the present bilateral relations, play an important part in our evaluation of the general state of affairs associated with relations between the Czech Republic, Austria and Germany (though in this case the influence is much smaller than in the past). The very accentuating of the interpretation of some of the past issues or the inconsistent explanation of these issues itself, quite significantly influences the reflection of the relations between the Czech Republic on one side and Germany and Austria on the other. This is very concise in the investigation of June 2004, which has mapped the view of our relations with the surrounding states mainly in the context of the discussion concerning the so-called Beneš' decrees. This investigation revealed that roughly two thirds of all respondents suppose that Beneš' decrees negatively influence the relations with Germany (65%), and more than two thirds of respondents claimed the same about our relations with Austria (43%).

The relations to Slovakia form a separate chapter. To a considerable extent these relations, with their historically given specific qualities, naturally and qualitatively go beyond the framework of the other monitored countries.

Czech-Slovak relations have not always been as good as today, so to speak, in the last

Figure 4. Positive Assessment of the CR Relations to Surrounding Countries - Chronological Comparison



Source: The IVVM research activities, since 2001 carried out as the CVVM research

three years. In the past, the relations of both succession states of the former federation went through certain peripatetic states, though mainly in the era of Vladimír Mečiar they did not reach the present level of depth in terms of both formal and informal links. There was a considerably strong change in the relations after the accession of the broad democratic coalition headed by Mikuláš Dzurinda in 1998. The bilateral relations have gained, quite realistically, a new qualitative level; the close political cooperation in the field of external relations, at the security level and in the economic sphere, have been reflected in opinions of the Czech general public. Positive assessment of our relations with Slovakia, in comparison with the year 1996, has revealed by approximately 40 percent points. After the first significant shift for the better, recorded in 1999 when roughly three quarters of all respondents, there has been another rapid growth in positive assessments since the beginning of 2002.

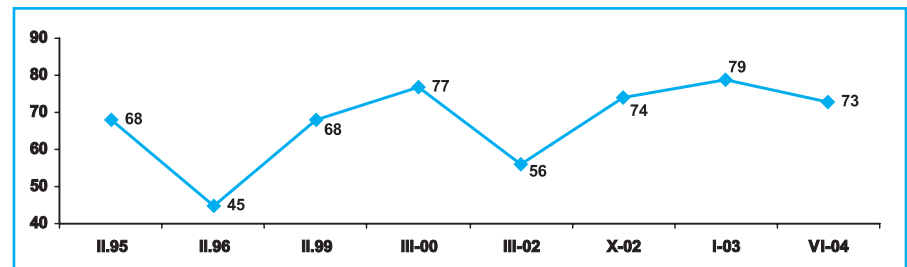
From Table 3 we can see that respect and trust prevails over mistrust with the Slovak Prime Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda and the Polish President A. Kwasniewski. With other monitored representatives of international political life distrust prevails among the Czech general public. However, it is necessary to note that the results of our investigation have been strongly influenced by one third of respondents not being able to give their standpoint in all cases. A big portion of respondents was also influenced by the fact that they do not know the leading Slovak politicians: in case of

the Slovak President 20% (though in the course of the investigation it was only the "designated" president), the Austrian Chancellor Schüssel 30% and the Hungarian Prime Minister Medgyessy - as many as one half of the Czech population.

- 1 The wording of the question: "How would you assess current relations of the Czech Republic with the neighbouring countries?"
- 2 In the present case it is interesting to mention that, according to the May investigation of the CVVM, the overwhelming majority of Czech respondents supported the surrounding transit countries; in Slovakia it was 83%, Poland 81% and Hungary 78% (only 8% of all respondents did not support these countries entering the EU).
Question: "Now I would like to ask you to what extent you trust people in other countries. Can you please tell me, in case of each country, whether you trust its inhabitants a lot or only a little?"
- 3 In case you do not know the prominent people from the given country sufficiently well, tell me and we will continue by answering a question about another country." (The possibilities offered: you somewhat trusting, hesitant trust, you rather not believe, you do not know, you are not aware of these facts). The investigation was part of the international comparative research called "European Election Survey 2004", dedicated to the implementation of the European Parliament elections. The research has been made in all member countries of the EU.

Daniel Kunštát

Figure 5. The Development of Positive Evaluation of the Czech Republic Relations with Germany (data in %)



Source: The IVVM (CVVM) data

Table 3. Respect to the Selected Political Prominent (in %)

	Trust	Mistrust	Don't know	Unknown
Mikuláš Dzurinda	39	25	30	6
Alexander Kwasniewski	34	19	33	12
Gerhard Schröder	23	34	30	13
Ivan Gašparovič	17	29	34	20
Wolfgang Schüssel	15	25	30	30
Péter Medgyessy	10	11	29	50

Source: CVVM, "Our Society 2004", 19th - 26th May, N=1006

A SMALL ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF CONCEPTS

THE EUROPEAN TASK OF GERMANY

Karl-Rudolf Korte

Can any convincing answers be deduced from what has been said about the position of the Germans and their role in Europe?, Decades of East-West conflict have propelled Germany back to discipline in their thinking and actions. Along with the collapse of the traditional picture of an enemy, the inherited or the still defended positions started to dissipate. The new system of coordinates requires a certain manner of integration, which is justified by the merits of the case. Why should the Germans in Europe be further integrated? How will this integration develop further? Which of the states must be integrated? Professional answers to these questions have so far been oriented to the categories, which have resulted from cognitive abilities and the political range of priorities in the periods of bipolarity. The facts derived from experience, however, point to a change in the trend. Since the session of the European Council on Maastricht (December 1991), there has been a significant change in the former way of thinking. Most of the Germans have come to a consensus that due to mutual dependence there is no other alternative but integrate. These people are willing to give up their sovereignty, but not their identity. The decline in competencies of national states does not mean, in any case, the decline in the feeling of belonging to the German nation.

These basic problems abandon traditional analyses of costs and profits associated with German membership in the European Union. They rather shift the mutual tension between the national state and European integration into the position of a theme of internal political culture. In this subjective dimension of politics, in which the nation finds itself face-to-face with Europe, a lot of German citizens have changed their attitudes. The question of the role of Germany in Europe must therefore be answered by the Germans themselves. Only certainty about their own role creates political options for which the Federal Republic of Germany is very important as a "federative factor" in both the democratic and effective widening of the EU and its extension to the East. Germany is not only a state deriving benefit from the international policy, but also the largest democratic state with the leading European currency (written in 1997- the editor's note) and at the same time the Germans are also creators and bearers of international politics. The foreign policy of the Federal Republic of Germany must be, in its own interest, oriented towards the preservation and extension of the democratic core of the European Union. The role of Germany in Europe is therefore seen in its support given to democracy.

The extract of the text has been taken over from the following publication: Weidenfeld, W.-Wessels, W. 1997. **Evropská unie od A do Z. (European Union from A to Z - Handbook of European Integration)**. Prague: Charles University/Carolinum Publishing. pp. 189-190.

LITERATURE RELATED TO THE THEME

CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN THE MIDDLE OF EUROPE

Dejmek, J. 2002. Čkoslovensko, jeho sousedé a velmoci ve XX. století (1918-1992). (Czechoslovakia, Its Neighbours and Great Powers in the 20th Century 1918-1992) Praha: Centrum pro politiku a ekonomiku. 384 stran. ISBN 80-86547-07-8.

The book published in 2002 represents a remarkably rich factography. It contains informative chapters concerning the history of Czechoslovak foreign policy. The author Jindřich Dejmek (1965) deals with the history of international relations and the foreign policy of Czechoslovakia, political and diplomatic relations of Czechoslovakia to the main European powers - Great Britain, France, and also to some other countries (Poland, Hungary, Germany) in the period from the birth of the republic until the present day.

In terms of its thematic orientation to Czech-German relations, the chapter, which contributes most to this theme, is called Difficult Neighbourhood: Czechoslovakia and German States. It is evident, even in the title, that the author organically deals with our relations to Austria and Germany, which is a result of certain material links to these countries both in the period from 1918 to 1938 and after the Second World War.

As early as the introductory phase of the new era of European relations, in October 1918, four provinces of "*Deutschböhmen*" were established, which manifested their rejection of the newly formed Czechoslovakia by the majority of the political representation and its German-speaking citizens. The organisers took this step in expectation that a federation of German speaking countries of Central Europe would be established, which they intended to join. The *Versailles Treaty*, however, only confirmed the birth of a chain of succession states.

T. G. Masaryk was aware of the importance of the new republic relations to the German-speaking inhabitants. Czechoslovakia conducted a fair policy of neighbourhood cooperation based on the assumption that the beaten Germany would sooner or later appear again on the European scene in the role of a superpower. The fears of the renaissance plans of *Mittleuropa* dominated by Germany, led the Czechoslovak foreign policy to create alliances with smaller states of Central and South-Eastern Europe, Romania and Yugoslavia within the framework of the *Little Entente*.

The signing of the Treaty of Locarno of 1925, in which Germany undertakes to respect the defined border on its western frontier, was an act of most significant importance for the development of Europe between the two wars. According to the opinions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the détente between Germany and France under the patronage of Britain was to meliorate the national antagonism inside Czechoslovakia. However, it did not result in the intensifying neighbourly relations and the Nazi assumption of power in 1939 led to activism of Sudeten German irredentism, using the right to self-determination for the German-speaking minority as an argument.

At that time there was no success in any contractual guaranty of the eastern German border and Czechoslovakia started to look for alternative solutions for security warranties. In 1936 massive attacks of Nazi propaganda elicited a response all over Europe; namely in Great Britain the complaints of K. Henlein about the alleged oppression of the Sudeten German minority in the Czechoslovak state found a fertile soil. The crisis culminated in September 1938, when the *Munich Agreement* ordered then the CSR to hand over a large part of the Czech lands territory in favour of the Third Reich.

In the post-war decision of the winning allies in Potsdam it was decided to transfer groups of ethnic Germans (including Sudeten Germans) to the territory of their mother country with the aim of preventing their being misused again. Germany was divided into two states in the Cold War period and the gradual settlement of their mutual relations, which was initiated by the so called eastern policy of W. Brandt, culminated in 1997 by signing of the Czech -German Declaration, in which both countries undertake not to burden their mutual relations with their past. In spite of that, the insistence on the repeal of the presidential decrees has complicated the Czech Republic entering the European Union.

Václav Klaus in the preface to one of his papers that contributed to this issue, maintains that "he considers the Czech statehood to be an unquestionable value not only in the historical view but also in the future "European" perspective of our national existence".

Václav Houžvička

CZECH POLICY TOWARDS GERMANY OSCILLATING BETWEEN ACTIVISM AND BEING ON THE DEFENSIVE (I)

Since 1989, Czech German relations have gone through more than a decade of mostly productive and intensive cooperation based on historically unparalleled similarity of interests and value orientation. Before the Czech Republic entered the EU, Czech policy towards the Federal Republic of Germany had been characterised mostly by a highly developed, decentralised cooperation in many areas of national economy, security, environmental protection, transport, etc. The Federal Republic of Germany has become the Czech Republic's most significant economic partner in both foreign trade and in the area of direct foreign investment in the CR. Only Škoda-Volkswagen guarantees around 10% of Czech export. In a number of areas - such as environmental protection, frontier protection, the establishing of the Central bank and the Constitutional Court, etc. - Czech economic policy was embracing some political, legal and administrative models and procedures from the neighbour. The relations in the area of culture and scientific research are without any problems. Only the limitations of the state budget and the public interest bear on them in a negative way.

The most visible element of mutual relations is not only their stability, but also the absence of new impulses at the political level. On the one hand Czech policy reacted to impulses (namely the negative ones), coming from Germany and some individual federal states of Germany, first of all from Bavaria. On the other hand since 1991, however, the character of the Czech policy towards the Federal Republic of Germany has been closely connected with the internal political constellation and willingness of the individual actors to mutually coordinate their attitudes and steps, i.e. after the period of optimism had ended. Neither the ideological affiliation of Prague and Berlin has become a guarantor of any intensive partnership under the leadership of the left wing and the left central wing government. The absence of tension between both the governments in the area of the historical agenda of relationships has not been automatically transformed to greater proximity. In addition to that, in 2003 Czech policy took a step away from Germany in questions concerning European integration and safety policy.

Various streams of Czech policy towards Germany have only seldom resulted in a unified approach that would go beyond what can be called the "minimum defensive consensus". This has been one of the reasons why Prague actively approached primarily towards the historical agenda of mutual relations, where such a narrowly specified consensus has existed only since 1995. Czech society was absorbing only very slowly the demythologised picture of Czech-German relations as submitted by a bilateral commission of historians and by individual researchers. The discussion was admittedly complicated even by the minority trend to certain "national nihilism" and some taking over of revisionist theses, which have been recently more assertive (which do not dominate) in the social discourse in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Since 1991 the internal political atmosphere in the relations with Germany has been influenced by a competition of the "guarantee policy" between the parties: some parties and their representatives were trying to gain confidence of the public by presenting themselves as defenders of the Czech Republic against real or alleged claims of Germany (Sudeten German Organizations). Contrary to the realistic policy of protecting the interests of the Czech state and its inhabitants, this competition was restricting the boards for governmental activities and was increasing the dependence on election preferences and support. In addition to that it has made Czech policy extremely sensitive to any measures or even verbal

Table 4. Support for New Member States Accession the EU (v %)

Question: "What is your opinion about these countries' entering the EU? Do you support or do you not support their entering the EU?"

	Support	Don't support	Don't know
Slovakia	83	8	9
Czech Republic	82	12	6
Poland	81	8	11
Hungary	78	8	14
Slovenia	77	8	15
Malta	70	8	22
Cyprus	68	11	21
Estonia	68	12	20
Latvia	68	13	19
Lithuania	67	13	20

Source: CVVM, *Naše společnost 2004/Our Society in 2004 (19th - 26th May 2004, N=1006)*

Note: The values in the table are aggregates of the following answers: "I strongly support" and "I tentatively support" a "I do not support" and "I definitely do not support"

gestures of various actors on the German political scene. In our view of the western neighbour an element of asymmetry has been created: it has happened very often that the Czech public and subsequently parts of the political scene have been influenced by the expedient attitude of radical Sudeten German unions and Bavarian municipal policy more than the German government and

its opponents at the federal level. Paradoxically, it frequently resulted in the inadvertent strengthening of secondary interest groups and organisations, as well as local policy itself by the very reaction of the Czech party.

Vladimír Handl
(to be continued in the next issue)

THE REGIONAL IDENTITY IN THE RELATIONS OF GLOBALIZATION AND MODERNIZATION

The problems surrounding man's identity are an eternal object of interest among social scientists [among others Goffman 1959, Mead 1968, Habermas 1976, Hauser 1989, Erikson 1991, Giddens 1996, Rosenthal 1997, Alheit 2002]. Many authors agree that identity is a crucial principle of each man's integrity and at the same time an existential platform of social groups or nations' life span [such as Chalupný 1932, Havel 1990, Patočka 1992, Gellner 1993, Hroch 1996, Holý 2001]. It enables people to find orientation in the complex social space, frequently less transparent and changing more and more in a dynamic way. Man's identity is formed by a great deal of relations to the surrounding world. In the system of these relations various identification ties and relations are formed in the course of a human life under the influence of various social, cultural or political changes and historical events. These identification ties and relations have disparate meanings and a mutually different intensity.

Recently, in connection with the process of European integration, modernisation of society and, as a consequence of the impact of globalisation, it has been topical and at the same time extremely attractive to think of the importance of the European identity. Along with this, a great number of specialists and researchers have been focusing their interest on research and the knowledge of manifestations of traditional local identities of minor cultural units (e.g. the international conference called "The European, National or Regional Identity", Prague 2003). Within the framework of creating a common European entity, the attention of domestic and foreign teams of researchers is more frequently focused on the research in the condition of the regional identity of inhabitants of various areas (among

others the project called "Biographische Identitäten im Grenzraum" 1999-2003 carried out by an international research team of the University of Göttingen, the University of Wrocław, the Sociological Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic - Department of the Czech Borderland). These teams do consider the regional dimension of human life as a significant problem of the present time and an inspirational source of professional discussions and polemics.

The regional identity is understood as one of the dimensions of man's identity. On the one side, in the general sense of the word, regional identity can be understood as an attempt at identifying oneself with a certain territory (i.e. a territory, region, place or space) and on the other side it can be taken as a sum of spiritual and material values characteristic of the regional set of heterogeneous communities, which is bequeathed to generations [Szcepański 1999].

The fundamental importance of investigation of the state of national identity comes to the fore in the perspective of European integration processes and in connection with the issues of the future functioning of a "common" Europe. At the same time, it is impossible to separate the importance of transformation of national states in terms of the growing openness to other cultures, ethnic groups and other elements of modernisation. According to F. Fukuyama, the American representative of political ideas (The End of the History and the Last Man, 1992), it is necessary to consider modernity as a triumph of market economy and liberal democracy, which represent a force that cannot be historically resisted by traditional local or regional cultures and communities. Also other authors deliberate upon the manner of extinction of traditional

communities and regional cultures in the light of continual expansion of modernity [Lévinas 1988, Müller 2001]. The investigation of regional identity is possible only in connection with processes of modernisation, the globalisation of the world and the so called post-modern trends in society. In association with the idea that life of contemporary man is strongly limited and demarcated by "the separation of time from space", due to accelerating trends of modernization of society and globalisation (globalisation can be understood as a process which forms the top of the modernisation trend, apparent since the period of the culminating Middle Ages - Budil 2003) and is concerned with the importance of regional space overlapping global space [Giddens 1996].

Globalisation impacts are marked by a universal ambition developed at different levels (social, cultural, economic and legal) with the depth and dynamics of these processes being distinguished according to the character and state of the social life of individual regions. One of the key issues is the capability of inhabitants of these regions to reflect these processes, (un)willingness to accept, select and institutionalise, or even create/form these modernist impulses and at the same time being able to cope with their social, cultural, political and economic consequences. Globalisation processes play a significant part in forming each man's relation to the place, the event and the stability of identification links to the territory. Within the impact and strength of globalisation processes the importance of regional identity is often doubted [Bauman 2002]. Regional links are often considered, in the perspective of "post-modern" thinking, as manifestations of conservatism and insufficient flexibility, as well as ability to react to the stimuli of the time [Keller 2000]. Some authors suppose that spatial determination of people is transformed into the participation of culture in the wider sense [Bauman 1999].

New efforts appear within the framework of globalisation and modernization impacts and strengthen regional links, quite often to the detriment of the links to state authorities. In the area of social sciences researchers are just developing a discourse concerned with direct globalisation impact on impugning the identity of relatively young phenomena, the national states' ethnic self-confidence, which has been forming for approximately 200 years.

There is a risk for these national cultures, functioning on the basis of the economic and social integration force of the national economy, that they may lose a considerable portion of their symbolic power. On the other side, marginal cultural communities and traditional regions, existing for a long period of time in an unequal cultural (social and political) position to the dictated interest of the national culture that is being constituted, can come to the fore.

Various ambitious cultural areas are now facing the possibility of making use of a real chance of getting a more advantageous position outside the national state within the "global village". In the perspective of the processes in Europe, the importance of regional identity is associated with anti-centralistic tendencies, with the effort to weaken nationalistic attitudes and stress requirements contributing to the formation of modern society [Habermas 1993]. The anti-integration concept of modernisation of Central and Eastern Europe point in the direction of rationalisation as the main bearer of a social change. Regionalism can be understood as a social movement that generates self-government and awareness of the local community [Szlachci-

cova 2003]. As a certain reaction to globalisation processes and the creation of global space, the researchers refer to a phenomenon of the so called "new regionalism", which stresses and makes more significant the uniqueness of regional communities and the authenticity of local structures. It also stresses man's link to the place and his rootedness in social and local cultures as well as physical space [Szlachcicova 2003].

The locality and the link to the place have a symbolic meaning and become an important pre-condition of the individual and collective identity. Besides "genius mundi", giving the sense of regional identity a relative importance, "genius regions" evidently exists with its certain non-recurrent quality and uniqueness of interconnection of extraordinary qualities and meanings of a certain territory with consciousness of its inhabitants. In the contexts of new rationalisation it seems that the regional identity of inhabitants remains one of the fundamental conditions for social and cultural cohesion in modernised societies.

With regards to localisation and individualisation of value attitudes in forming lifestyles and in the dynamics of cultural changes and thus also reducing foreseeability and transparency of society as a whole, the regional identity is, on the contrary, a factor contributing to order, stability, orientation in social space and finally also to the common interest and mutual cohesion of individuals and social groups.

Apart from modernisation effects in society and globalisation impacts, or apart from the

new rationalisation discourse, the formation of knowledge concerning concrete social and economic conditions of the region and some other expected factors (such as the strength of social links, landscape, ecological situation, which may influence the decision-making processes of social actors while solving various situation in human life), is very important for understanding all processes leading to the formation of identification links to the region.

Namely in the regions with an extremely high unemployment rate and a backward economic structure, or a highly polluted environment, the inhabitants have to face serious problems every day, which are often a reason for their leaving the region. Numerous questions appear that focus on the real condition of regional identity, about its structure, factors decisive for the inhabitants' relation to the region or strong regional identity of main social groups.

The regions are not only tilt-yards of the past or a less successful playground of the present day, but they also prove to be a significant "arena" of the future and its inhabitants seem to be the main actors of its future appearance and in the functioning of the common European space [Vencálek 1998]. The regions functioning within national states (also national states are considered to be "regions" within Europe) are the most serious prerequisite for the successful functioning of the European Union as a whole.

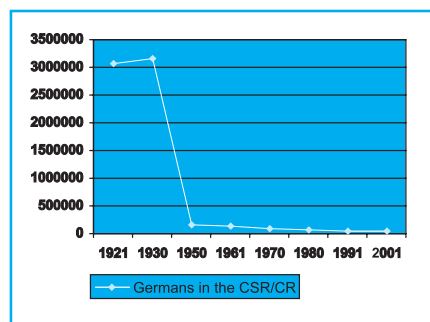
Ondřej Roubal

THE POSITION OF THE GERMAN MINORITY IN THE CONTEXT OF CZECH-GERMAN RELATIONS

According to the final results of the General census of the people, houses and flats as of March 1, 2001, 980 283 persons were registered in the Czech Republic as inhabitants of a nationality (nationalities) other than Czech, which represents 9.4% of all inhabitants; of which 36 106 (0.4%) are citizens of German nationality.¹ Nevertheless, representatives of German organisations often doubt the results of the last census and in fact expect that there can be a higher number of inhabitants of Ger-

man nationality. The fact that this possibility might come into consideration can be triggered off by the results of the 2001 census carried out on the basis of the citizens' registration as users of the mother tongue. German as a mother tongue was entered in the questionnaire forms by 41 328 persons (0.4%) and the concurrent use of Czech and German, i.e. registration of both mother tongues, was claimed by 11 061 persons (0.1%).² Also the data provided by the German Embassy concerning the

Figure 6. Development in the Number of Members of the German Minority in 1950-2001



Source: The CSSR Historical Statistical Yearbook. 1985 Federální statistický úřad/SNTL. 429 Stašková, B. 2004. Národnostní menšiny v ČR [National Minorities in the CR]. Internal print of the Office of the Government of the CR

Figure 7. The Development in the Number of Members of the German Minority in 1961-2001 in A Detailed View

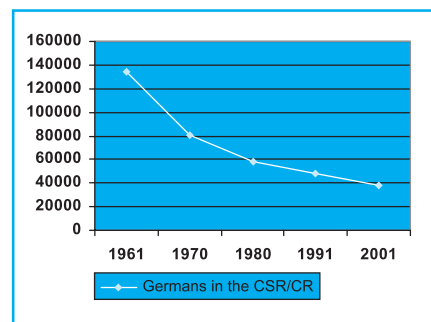


Table 5. A Long-term Trend in the Number of German-Speaking Population of the Czech lands

Rok	1961	1970	1980	1991	2001
Počet Němců ČSSR/ČR	134.143	80.903	58.211	48.556	39.106

Source: Hernová, Š. „Němci v ČSR v letech 1950 - 1980.“ Slezský sborník, 1987, Vol. 85, No. 4: 265

number of issued German passports do exceed the results of the last census. In the year 2002 there were 60 000 holders of German passports in the Czech Republic.

*"The representatives of the German minority explain this situation, among other, by claiming that the older generation still suffers from the fear of openly admitting they are citizens of German nationality. It is impossible not to take into account the persistence of this phenomenon in the privacy of the older generation of members of the German minority. It predicates, in individual cases, damage of a psychological character in consequence of the measures taken after the world war."*³

The German minority is the third largest national minority in the Czech Republic in spite of the fact there has been a significant decline in the number of these inhabitants since the post-war transfer. Only in the last two cases of the census (the last two censuses) in 1991 and 2001, the number of persons of German nationality dropped by 8 500 people, i.e. by one fifth.

The current demographic trends confirm that there is a great fall in representatives of this minority. The decreasing number of the German national minority is not an exceptional phenomenon. Other minorities also show a fall in the Czech Republic (including German minorities in a number of European countries).

Less favourable is also the age and education structure of the German minority in the Czech Republic, although the steep decline in the number of the minority members has been successfully and significantly reduced since the 80s.⁴ Women still form the majority in the German minority, i.e. 53% (20 715 persons). In associations of the Germans the average age is 65 years (The Assembly of the Germans 65; in the Cultural Association 69 years), which corresponds with the demographic data from the census of the people. In women, the prevailing age is between 50 and 70; the structure in men is even less favourable - 34% of men are over 70.

The absence of ethnic intelligence significantly influences the whole character of the minority. There is a lack of the generating power that will create and preserve the cultural heritage of the minority. In addition to that, the contemporary young generation forms a small percentage of the total age structure of this minority (only less than 13% of Czech Germans are at the age below 29 and, less than 4.5% of people do not exceed the age of 14 years) and the overall majority does not identify itself with German nationality. Less than one half of German citizens have achieved only primary education; young people, who completed their education at vocational schools without passing the final examination, represent the second largest group. Prior to 1989 these citizens had often been prevented from obtaining a higher degree/education by reason of an obstacle in the form of their ethnic origin.

The weakened ethnic identity of Czech Germans is also confirmed by their decline of interest in the life of their unions. What strikes us most is the fact that in both unions of the German minority only 8.500 members are registered in the Cultural Association of Inhabitants of German Nationality, established in 1969, and in the Assembly of the German in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, formed in 1992. This figure presents approx. less than 25% of the total number of Czech Germans. At the same time it is necessary to mention that according to the information of Ministry of the Interior as of 31st December 2003, there are 55 legal entities (of German minority

organisations), which stress the German national and minority aspect in their Articles of Association or organisations developing activities in favour of the German minority. The reasons why the majority of the Germans is not interested in forming associations can be traced in the past, namely to the persisting experience of the post-war year and the sinister experience of their maltreatment.

*"The main cause lies in the real situation of the German population of the post-war year and the years of the totalitarian regime; it is a consequence of being bullied and afraid to openly and publicly confess (to) their nationality. Although the situation has changed now and the minority members may meet and find satisfaction in self-realization, fear and doubts still persist."*⁵

Just by way of comparison, allow me to illustrate the situation of the Germans in Slovakia, where the overall majority, i.e. 4 800 out of 5 400 citizens of German nationality, are registered in the Carpathian German Association, the only organisation for the German minority in Slovakia.

The Assembly of the Germans in the Czech Republic in Moravia and Silesia, i.e. the organisation with a bigger number of members, is considered to be, with its 5 500 persons of German nationality, the umbrella organisation for individually registered regional unions. The largest regional Association of the Germans can be found in the Karlovy Vary, Liberec and Moravia and Silesia Region.

The ethnic identity of the Czech Germans was corrupted by the "punishing" principles of the post-war period. Only as late as 1968 was the minority legally recognized (by Act No. 144/1968 on the position of nationalities in the CSSR). Until that period of time all kinds and forms of pressure were developed to make German citizens abandon their ethnic origins and make them assimilate with the majority.⁶ Assimilation (and therefore the extinction) of the minority was also the aim of the Communist regime. A year later, i.e. in 1969, the Cultural Centre of Citizens of German Nationality was established (in the archives designated as one of the most active Unions of the National Front).⁷ The union activities after 1989 were focused on the prevention of the citizens' decline of interest in relevant problems of the minority, in finding again and maintaining their own cultural production, revitalization of language competence in the German language, educating children in their mother tongue, publishing their own printed materials (newspapers, magazines) and looking for historical continuity within the Czech territory, including the looking for new contents.⁸ The conditions for reaching these goals are secured from two sources. One of them is the subsidy policy by means of the Ministry of Culture and Education and Youth and Physical Training - in the form of projects submitted to civic associations of individual national minorities within the framework of the support provided for the Meeting Centres of the Federal Republic of Germany (by means of the FRG Embassy in Prague). The German minority, just like other minorities, has the support of governmental bodies, including financial assistance.⁹

The role of the German minority in Czechoslovakia since 1918 has been mostly irredentist. The existence of the new republic was rejected by the representation of the Germans living in the Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak Germans, like any other unsatisfied social or ethnic group, attached to extremist parties and nationalistically pointed rhetoric. They

became the subject of a policy that led to the final rupture, to the end of mutual coexistence of Germans with the Czechs in Czech Lands.¹⁰ When formulating their political requirements, German politics started from the so called thoughts about Great Germany and Pan German thoughts accentuating the Germans to the detriment of the other inhabitants.¹¹ The transfer of Czechoslovak Germans must be interpreted as a result of the Second World War. The later usurpation of power by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia started the period of stagnation in the political, cultural and social life, i.e. also in the national policy of the time, which lasted until 1989.

If we ask a question concerning the type of role the German minority plays in the reference framework of current Czech-German relations, we have to take into account all previously mentioned data. A significant moment for change in German representation was the year 1989. For Czechoslovak Germans this was a period of activism. They started to gather at the political level in the nationalist section of the Civic Forum; in the first election they even had one representative in the Federal Assembly and in the Czech National Council. Groups of extremist participants of the German minority in Plzeň joined after 1989 the activity of the Sudeten Democratic Party with the aim of getting the property and financial compensation of both the Czech and Sudeten Germans. The requirements including the abolishment of Beneš' decrees became more and more radical.

From the very beginning of the process, the two unions representing the German minority in the Czech Republic could be characterised by deviation from the activity of the Sudeten Democratic Party. This organisation with initial ambitions of a political party, which had been trying to constitute itself since 1992 and supported by the Union of the Transferred Střibro-Plzeň German Fellow-Countrymen in Dinkelsbühl, broke up a year later due to less transparent political aims of their further orientation and due to political disputes in its leadership.¹²

In 1990, at the level of organisation, another union was formed apart from the Cultural Association of the CR Citizens of German nationality - the Union of Germans in the Czech Republic. The newly established union, which changed its name after the disintegration of Czechoslovakia, to the Assembly of the Germans in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia soon after its foundation, gained the dominating position in the representation of the German minority, at first in Czechoslovakia and later also in the Czech Republic. Today, the Assembly of the Germans represents Czech Germans in the FUEV¹³ (the Federalist Union of European Minorities) and also in the Czech Branch of the Brussels EBLUL, since its birth in 2004, (The European Bureau for Less Used languages) and it has sent its representative to the Coordination Board of the Czech-German Discussion Forum, regularly since its establishment in 1998.

From the point of view of legal obligations towards the German minority it is evident that it enjoys the protection of minority rights like all other minorities in the Czech Republic. They are protected by both the internal legal order and international contract commitments. The position of this minority in Czech-German relations has been anchored in two Czech-German treaties: The treaty between the FRG and the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic of Good Neighbourhood Relationship and Friendly Cooperation of 1992 and the Czech-German Declaration of Mutual Relations and Their Future Development of 1997.¹⁴ In a 1992 treaty the German minority is paid atten-

tion to in Article 20, subsec. 1 through 5 and in Article 21, subs. 1 through 3, according to which this minority is guaranteed support in the area of their maintaining culture and traditions, as well as their development. The confirmation of these obligations can be also found in Article V of the Declaration¹⁵ and in the Agreement of the Cultural Cooperation with Germany signed of 2001.

From the above given data it is clear that the German minority plays an important role in the context of Czech-German relations. Unfavourable data about the social structure, which show a reduction in the number of their participants, cannot change anything. On the other side, however, it is necessary to see the shortcomings, which do not enable the minority to take over the role of an active bridge between the Czechs and the Germans. These shortcomings in fact make this minority the weakest element among discussion parties in Czech-German relations. It is mainly the insufficient number of educated persons, small credibility of representatives of the political parties in the Czech Republic and the representation split into two unions that make this minority so weak. The unforgettable item of the latest development is the highly discussed humanitarian gesture towards active opponents of Nazism and participants of national minorities. The proposal submitted by Mr. Mareš, the Vice PM of Špidla Government, counted on providing compensation to several hundred of Czech Germans (by means of the Czech-German Fund for the Future) who could prove a direct connection between the suffered personal damage and the measures taken after the World War II (namely in the years 1945-48, or until 1953, when the process of alteration of their position was completed) on the territory of the Czech Republic, against the citizen from among the so called enemy inhabitants.

This governmental decree was preceded by the proposal of the former president of the Assembly of the Germans, H. Korbel, of 2001, which did not respect the Czech standpoint of historical and legal continuity, and was rejected by the Petition Committee of the Parliament the Czech Republic in January 2002.

One part of the political representation and the general public has become acquainted with the situation of citizens of German nationality and started to show a greater interest in it. More differentiated opinions are becoming unearthed, which can become a solid base for political, professional and public discussion about this still highly sensitive issue - in terms of both the independent German minority and the majority population.

The German national minority is being incorporated into supranational organisations of national minorities in Europe by means of the representations of the Assembly of the Germans in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. They are using the form of cultural and union cooperation (FUEV, EBLUL, etc.), and maintaining contacts with other German minorities, mostly those from the former Eastern block (Slovakia, Hungary, Poland). Also youth minority organisations have been established, e.g. Jukon (Jugendkontakt), which have approximately 100 members, mainly in the regions of northern Moravia and eastern Bohemia. The nationalistic factor here is not an exclusively constituent sign here; nevertheless Jukon can be defined as a youth organisation of the German minority.

In addition to that, the Czech autochthonous Germans get assistance for their activities from so called "New Germans", i.e. citizens of the FRG and Austria, who have settled down as permanent residents due to having a good job or a family there, or for different reasons.

The future representation of the German minority will probably become a combination of these two groups.

Lukáš Novotný

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- 12 Viz Mareš, M. (ed.) 2003. *Etnické a regionální strany v ČR po roce 1989*. (Ethnic and regional parties in the CR after 1989) Brno: CDK. 215-218.
- 13 In the FUEV the Assembly of the Germans started as a corresponding member represented by the Sudeten German Council until 1997, when it was given the statute of an independent member. This change can only be welcomed with regards to the "asymmetric" character of this representation.
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**Further information
and language mutations
are available
at the website:
www.borderland.cz**

BASIC INFORMATIONS OF MINORITY POLICY IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The set of basic information and documents approximating the legal framework of the position of national minorities in the Czech Republic includes both statistical data from the *2001 census of the people, flats and houses* and all basic legislative documents related to this theme. It is available in the following two-language (Czech/English) publication:

National Minority Policy of the Czech Republic.

It was published by the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic - Secretariat of the Council for National Minorities, Prague, 2003.

The publication also reflects, besides the current state of the above mentioned problems, all significant changes after the Czech Republic joining *the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (1998) and after signing *the European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages* (2000) and after the CR Parliament's approval of the *Rights of Members of National Minorities' Act* (2001).

OPINIONS OF THE CZECH AND GERMAN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT CANDIDATES

Before the election in June 2004, the working group of the Politics of the Czech-German Youth Forum, formed by the initiative of the Co-ordination Council of the Czech-German Discussion Forum (established in 2001), carried out research among the Czech and German candidates to the European Parliament (EP), the main aim of which was to assess possibilities of closer cooperation between the Czechs and the Germans within the framework of the European Union. Approximately 50 Czech and 104 German candidates took part in the investigation „The Research in Attitudes of Czech and German Candidates in the 2004 Election to the European Parliament and Other Issues of Czech-German Relations in the European Context“. This election confirmed different proportions of the EP seats and achieved that all parliamentary parties of both countries had their representatives in the EU. The candidates were asked a total number of 8 questions concerning the current issues that are being tackled by both countries.

In the question concerning concrete and personal experience in the other country there is an assumption that the Czech party knows Germany much better than the German party, which does not know so much about the Czech Republic. According to the public inquiry, 24% of respondents among German candidates to the EU have no knowledge about the Czech Republic; in case of the Czech candidates the knowledge about Germany appears only in 4% of Czech candidates. The overall Czech majority has either some (48%), or frequent (48%) experience of Germany. With the Germans it is by 10 less in both cases.

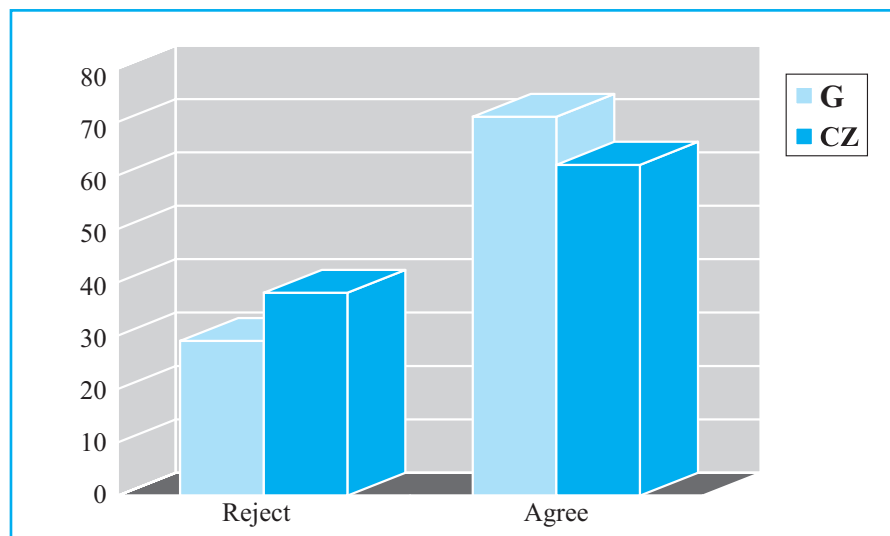
The language competence - knowledge of the language of the neighbouring country - is still an unresolved problem of Czech-German understanding. While 82% of the EU candidates from the Federal Republic of Germany do not speak Czech, 67 of their Czech colleagues can make themselves understood in German.

The question in which spheres you can imagine a special Czech -German cooperation at the European level and what this cooperation might look like was answered as follows: the majority of Czech candidates admit that this type of cooperation can develop in education and youth activities (30%), in the sphere of cross-border regions (21%), in infrastructure (12%) and culture (12%). Among the German EU candidates the prevailing opinion focused on the narrow cooperation in cross-border regions (20%), on education and youth (17%) and culture (15%). As evident, both sides of candidates put stress on cooperation among the regions and believe that their mutual cooperation and coordination can bring them a really positive development. Similar concord appears in the area of education and youth. Differentiated are the attitudes to the possibility of reconciliation, which has also been offered in the questionnaire. While 13% of German EU candidates wish intensive co-operation, the proportion of the colleagues from the CR, who are of the same opinion, reaches only 3% of the respondents.

The frequently discussed issue are the negotiated/contracted transitional periods for the free movement of labour force between the CR and the FRG. Both parties, Czech and German, have given their consent to these measures. With the Czechs it is 62% and with the Germans 71%. Really surprising is a high ratio of acceptance of these transitional periods on the labour market with the Czech EP candidates. Part of these candidates indicated the contracted transitional periods as "the evil of necessity". Both parties then congruently expressed their hope that these limitations would not be preserved for the whole period of seven years.

Figure 8. Opinions of limited movement of workers from the CR

Questions: „What do you mean of settled terms for limited movement of workers between the CR and Germany?“ (in %)



Source: Research of the group Policy of the Czech-German Youth Forum: Eastern Enlargement of the EU, 2004 (N=152)

Note: G=respondents of the FRG, CZ=respondents of the CR

The research confirmed divergent positions between the Czech and the German parties in connection with the role of the EU in the discussion about the so-called "Beneš' Decrees". According to the German EU candidates, the EU should have a mediating or active role. The overall majority of Czech EU candidates, on the contrary, supported the view that the EU should not play any role in these relations (90%). 10% of the Czechs can imagine the mediating role of the EU, none of the respondents, however, wishes the EU to have an active role.

The agreement of opinion is evident in the question whether the division (election) of representatives of the CSU and the EVP-ED fraction in the European Parliament against the CR entering the EU will have any consequences for further cooperation. 60% of Czech and 67% of German respondents do not expect any consequences for our future cooperation; 34% of German respondents are afraid that cooperation with the Czech colleagues can be influenced in a negative way.

While with the Czechs it is only 19%.

Further research questions were concerned with the future European unification and namely the constituting of European identity and policy in the area of youth.

The Czech-German Youth Forum /Deutsch-Tschechisches Jugendforum/ has been in existence since 2001 and includes 20 Czech and 20 German young people, mostly multipliers and representatives of various unions of youth. Its members are elected for a period of two years and their aim is to support a dialogue for the young generation, which exceeds state boundaries and wants to contribute by giving impulses for mutual approaches of both countries in Europe. Some other details about the activities of this organisation and about the presented research can be found at the following website address:

www.jugendforum.ahoj.info

Lukáš Novotný

We welcome your opinions concerning the bulletin of Czech-German Connections, or any possible observation and experience in Czech-German Relations. You can send your contributions to the address.

Czech-German Connections

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